LABOUR MONTHLY

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'EAST OF SUEZ' AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY

The Editor

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ENGINEERS' PACKAGE DEAL

A. Henderson

★

HOW TO FIGHT PRICE RISES

J. R. Campbell

★

BRITAIN AND ATOMIC ENERGY

Dr. E. H. S. Burhop

MARCH 1965

Two Shillings

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Notes of the Month

'EAST OF SUEZ'

What would happen to our balance of payments if we had to take our troops out of Malaya?
WOODROW WYATT, M.P., speech at Donnington, March 21, 1952.

If we'd had no troops overseas we would have no balance of payments crisis.
WOODROW WYATT, M.P., *Sunday Mirror*, February 7, 1965.

February 15, 1965

Britain's 'Defence' White Paper, due for publication on February 11, has been postponed until February 23. By the time these lines appear, readers will be aware of its fateful contents, which represent the real governing 'Plan for Britain'. The delay in publication has revealed the divisions in the Cabinet continuing until the last moment. Nor are these divisions surprising. The immediate issues of division are reported to have turned on the TSR 2 (on which the Government's statement of policy on February 2 concerning military plane projects postponed decision until the future, while emphasising that the cost would be £750 million), and the fantastic total of British occupation troops in West Germany serving no purpose save to eat up Britain's foreign currency reserves. These specific issues, TSR 2 and B.A.O.R., are only symptoms of the wider questions of policy involved. The T.U.C. has called for a reduction in arms expenditure, and especially in overseas military expenditure. The economic and financial departments of the administration, and their ministerial representatives, are understood to have made representations in the same direction. Nor is there doubt in the mind of any Minister of the urgency of economy in this sphere. The projected figure for the White Paper, already prepared by the Tory Government, and inherited by the Labour Government, is stated to have reached the record total of £2,140 million, in contrast with the nominal official total of £1,998 million last year. No wonder a Labour Ministry should have qualms about having to appear before the public and their supporters as the sponsors of this record highest arms expenditure in British history, at the very moment when they are trying to stress the gravity of the economic and financial crisis to the nation. Yet there is no sign or prospect so far of any major reduction, and every indication of a perspective of spiralling growth.

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Why?

What will be the final figure they will reach? Will they succeed by desperate paring here and there on details to bring the total just below the horrifying figure of £2,000 million? Or will even this aim elude them, and the grim record highest figure have to be presented? The delay in publication is indeed eloquent. But why this difficulty? Why this inability to make any major reduction in this crippling figure? Why this refusal to apply the axe, when every Minister knows that this is the decisive factor—far more than any question of productivity or exports, which are in fact the victims, shackled and hamstrung by this burden? Indeed, it is precisely this burden which makes valueless the usual facile comparisons with the productive and trading record of West Germany or Japan, since these countries have not been hampered during the past decade by any such comparable burden (nor by the volume of state debt). Why in the midst of so much ministerial energy this reluctance to tackle the most obvious unparalleled waste of Britain's skill and man-power and resources, and reckless government overseas spending (totalling £450 million or more than half the estimated deficit on this year's balance of payments), although everyone knows that this is at the heart of Britain's present economic difficulties and balance of payments problem? Why? Why?

Who Threatens Britain?

Is Britain in danger? Is any power threatening Britain, to compel such gigantic expenditure for 'defence'? Busy and ingenious as the general staff pundits are, even they have not been able to think up a prospective enemy against whom to prepare their war plan. Never were conditions so favourable for Britain's peace. In the future the German danger may revive, as in the thirties, if Britain's present policy is pursued of rearming the heirs of Hitler; but that moment is not yet, and can still be averted by a wiser policy. Is 'Russia' threatening Britain? Not even the infantile backwoods naïveté of a Peter Simple attempts any longer to sell that one. Are the terrible Chinese preparing to invade Britain? All Wilson's attempts to make our flesh creep with the spectre of the Chinese atom bomb have not succeeded in making that suggestion credible. Indeed, even he endeavours to take refuge in a hint that the Chinese atom bomb might prove a future possible menace to South-East Asia or India. However, in following this well-worn track of offering a speculative prediction of an alleged future menace thousands of miles away as a

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justification for a present gigantic British arms programme, he forgets the hard facts of the real world. China is not invading South-East Asia. Britain and the United States are. And that is the crux of the whole question.

Formula of Death

What, then, is the answer? Why are all the weighty considerations of Britain's precarious economic and balance of payments situation, which in every other respect weigh like an Old Man of the Sea on the consciousness of Ministers, and which so manifestly make imperative a drastic cut in this unprecedented peace-time arms programme and overseas military expenditure, ignored in practice, when it comes to this sphere? Why are considerations which are felt acutely even by a Mr. Brown or a Mr. Callaghan, which correspond to the undoubted wishes of the mass of the labour movement, and which are today voiced by the entire official trade union leadership, right, left or centre, of the Trades Union Congress, always and invariably so far overruled in the final decision, when it comes to the crunch, in the higher councils of the Government? The overpowering consideration, which throws all prudence, economy, common sense or even political expediency to the winds, is not in fact a secret. For public consumption it finds expression in that sacrosanct formula which has become the favourite and most ceaselessly repeated formula of Harold Wilson (let us hope it will not rank as his most quoted contribution to history or 'famous last words')—'East of Suez'. 'Britain must be strong East of Suez'. Here is the formula of death.

Why 'East of Suez'?

Why must it be laid down as an axiom outside argument, like one of the Ten Commandments, overriding every practical consideration, overriding every real economic and social need of Britain, that Britain must be 'strong' 'East of Suez'? What right has Britain to claim to be 'strong' in other people's countries thousands of miles away from the shores of Britain, and to call this 'defence'? Suppose the Soviet Union were to proclaim: 'Russia must be strong West of Newfoundland'. Suppose China were to lay down 'China must be strong West of Denmark'. Such formulas would be obviously comic. Why then is the 'East of Suez' formula for Britain to be treated as a supposedly obvious and justified formula in the natural pre-ordained order of the world? Undoubtedly Wilson has of late been in the habit of repeating this holy formula with untiring multiplication like a

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priest telling over his rosary. Legend tells us that Queen Mary I of England—not the present Queen Mother, but 'Bloody Mary', as she used to be called by the Protestants before the current largely successful Catholic counter-reformation in English upper class and official culture—lamented that the name of England's lost possession of 'Calais' would be found engraved upon her heart when she died. In the event of the present trend of events and policy leading at some future date to the demise of the present Labour Government, it may well be that the epitaph 'East of Suez' may be found engraved upon its heart (if any). Before the worst has befallen, while there is still time to change the course, let us examine what really lies behind this formula 'East of Suez'.

A Skunk By Any Other Name

Once again there is in reality no ground for uncertainty of the real meaning. 'East of Suez' is simply the modern polite euphemism for imperialism. 'Imperialism' stinks in the nostrils of all. 'Colonialism' stinks. The songs of the glories of Empire can no longer be sung. Labour above all has pinned its flag to the mast as the party which gloriously abolished the Empire and 'gave' freedom to all its peoples (just as George III 'gave' freedom to the United States; the episodes of throwing 60,000 Indians into prison by the Second Labour Government for the crime of demanding national independence, or of throwing Nkrumah into prison by the Third Labour Government, are diplomatically forgotten). When, therefore, the same basic requirements of imperialist domination, exploitation, maintenance of bases and military occupation continue in a series of key territories, a new term has to be found. 'Neo-colonialism' will hardly do; that term has been devised by the Marxists and adopted by the Afro-Asian leaders. But the traditional art of the British ruling class has never lacked skill in finding sweet terms to cover ugly realities. In the new conditions 'East of Suez' is an innocent innocuous geographical term. But no one has any reason to be in any doubt what it really means. It means the Middle East and South-East Asia. It means the continuing key regions of British imperialist domination and exploitation. It means Aden and Singapore. It means oil and rubber and tin. It means the base of the biggest British monopolies. And therefore it means still the governing levers of strategy of British imperialism today, for whose imperative requirements the domestic economy of the metropolis is cramped and distorted, and the burdens are thrown, not only on the overseas exploited peoples, but also on the people of Britain.

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Why War in South-East Asia?

Why is there war today in South-East Asia? Why should two of the biggest, richest and most heavily armed world powers, the United States and Britain, send scores of thousands of troops, with massed warships and bombing planes, thousands of miles across the seas, to invade the countries of small, poor and weakly armed nations, and pour havoc and destruction upon their homes, their women and children (the United States in Vietnam today, following up the record of Britain in Malaya, with official British aid for repeating the barbarous methods of the Malayan war), and inflict tormenting deaths on scores of thousands of these peoples, who only ask to live in peace and be free from foreign invasion and occupation? Could there be any more revolting crime against civilisation? Why should British Labour be mixed up in this crime?

Hypocritical 'Explanations'

The smug official 'explanations' deceive no one. Wilson says that we must fulfil our treaty obligations to our Commonwealth ally, Malaysia. But everyone knows that 'Malaysia' is an invention of British imperialism, maintained only by British arms and military occupation. 'If Britain had not shown such determination, the state of Malaysia would not have come into existence' (*Economist*, January 9, 1965). United States violent intervention has even less of a figleaf, as the puppet military dictatorships of terror suceed one another with bewildering rapidity in Saigon. President Eisenhower himself said that every 'knowledgeable' person knew that 'had elections been held at the time of the fighting, possibly 80 per cent of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader rather than Chief of State Pao Dai' ('Mandate for Change'). So it is argued that the people of Vietnam, if left free, would choose communism; therefore violent intervention must be used against them to prevent it. In other words, the military invasion and bombardment of Vietnam is not to 'protect' them against some external enemy, but to prohibit the fulfilment of their own wishes. What right have the United States and Britain to use military force to prevent peoples choosing their own political system? Why should British Labour sponsor this?

Geopolitical Mania

The sophistical argument to justify these colonialist wars is carried even further. The 'domino' theory is invoked. If the people of X

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escape from the net of Western imperialism and choose communism, then Y will follow, next Z, and presently the whole alphabet. If Vietnam, then Laos, then Cambodia, then Thailand, then Burma, then India, then the Arab East, then Africa, and so the whole globe. Therefore a stand must be made in Vietnam, and all the torture, napalm, horror camps and bombardment of hospitals is justified. This is the familiar 'geopolitical' phantasy which used to be beloved of Hitler and his gangster associates to justify every new aggression. 'Use large maps' was the reply the old Marquess of Salisbury used to make to the victims of geopolitical mania. Certainly the peoples of the whole world will eventually choose the communist social order in place of the obsolete economic order of class society and private ownership of the gigantic modern forces of production whose accelerating expansion is more and more incompatible with such shackles. No military violence by the champions of the old order can prevent this historic change. But every people will reach this outcome at their own time, by their own path, in their own way. We are against differences of social order being made issues of war. We are against the export either of revolution or counter-revolution.

Why Not a Negotiated Settlement?

The peoples of Vietnam, of China, of the Soviet Union, of all socialist countries, of the whole world want peace. Also in the United States the Gallup poll showed 81 per cent of the people desiring to see a negotiated settlement in Vietnam through an international conference. When the Japanese invaders retreated from Indochina, having been fought throughout the war, not by the French colonialists, but by the national liberation movement, the people set up their people's committees in every village and their free democratic republic led by Ho Chi Minh. Then also they were for peace with freedom, and were ready to negotiate with the French imperialists in 1946 to be part of the 'French Overseas Community' as a self-governing people. But the French colonialists refused and sought to re-establish their colonial régime. When after eight years of cruel war the French imperialists had to admit defeat and withdraw, the people again sought a peaceful settlement. The Geneva Conference of fourteen nations in 1954, with Britain and the Soviet Union as Co-Chairmen, drew up the agreements for the independence of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; for the withdrawal of foreign armed forces; and for the reunification of Vietnam, temporarily sundered by the cease-fire line, within two years, that is, by 1956,

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through free democratic elections. Once again there was hope of peace. But the biggest robber imperialism of all, United States imperialism, stepped in to take over the war from French imperialism; refused to endorse the Geneva Agreements; prevented the free democratic elections for the reunification of Vietnam; and opened a still more cruel war, continuing and now threatening further extension. The Soviet Union's repeated appeals during these years to Britain as Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference responsible for the fulfilment of the Agreements have met with a negative response. Today a position has been reached when the Soviet Union has called for an international conference for a peaceful negotiated settlement. China has called for an international conference. France calls for an international conference. India and China have issued similar calls. Who blocks the way? The United States and Britain.

Britain's Corrupt Deal with the United States

If Britain could be detached from this complicity with the United States aggressors in Vietnam, the United States would be isolated before the world, just as Britain and France were over Suez. Why, then, does Britain, and above all a British Labour Government, in defiance of its signed obligations of the Geneva Agreements, line up with the American invaders and aggressors to defend their crime which all the world condemns? There is no mystery about the answer. Britain defends the crime of the United States in Vietnam in order to secure in return the support of the United States for their own crime in 'Malaysia'. In Malaya also the people's liberation movement fought the Japanese invaders, when all the British colonialist rulers had fled; the heroic liberation leaders marched in the Victory March in London in 1945, and the British authorities loaded them with honours; within a few years the same British authorities were placing a price upon their heads, ranging up to £80,000. Here also the people set up their people's committees in every village after the retreat of the Japanese, and their elected democratic assembly and government. But the British armed forces returned to restore the colonialist régime, dissolved the people's committees, established a 'legislative council' without one single elected member, arrested the people's leaders, dissolved the trade unions and every democratic organisation, and opened cruel war upon the people.

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'Malaysia' and Vietnam

When this war had failed to crush the people, by 1957 an independent Malaya was proclaimed under continuing British military occupation, with a puppet government under the reactionary feudal sultan Tunku Abdul Rahman. As the precarious instability of this puppet régime, dependent on British arms, became increasingly obvious, the further device was adopted in 1963 of dragging in other British colonial territories in the region, Sarawak and North Borneo (Brunei was also to have been incorporated, but the people successfully revolted and refused to be dragged in) to constitute a Federation of 'Malaysia'—an even more artificial Federation than the Central African Federation devised by the same artificers a decade earlier and since dissolved by the resistance of its peoples. Thus on the basis of mutual connivance over 'Malaysia' and Vietnam, Britain and the United States stand for the moment united as partners in crime before the condemnation of the world. But within Britain the popular movement is rising to compel a change.

For Whose Profit?

But why should British policy direct such a main concentration of its strategy and armed power, including a heavy drain upon its home resources, upon this region of South-East Asia? And why should such a policy be taken over and carried forward with such zeal and even increased concentration by a Labour Government? Once again there is no mystery about the answer. Here is the main region of the biggest interests of British monopoly capitalism, alongside the Middle East. £400 million of British capital in Malaysia alone, with dividends still reaching in some cases 300 per cent and 400 per cent. £160 million in Indonesia—here with increasing fear of extending nationalisation, since the Indonesian people, who also had to conduct their hard battle against the British and Dutch colonialist forces after the war, have really won their national independence, and recognise the menace which is represented by the dagger of the puppet imperialist state of 'Malaysia', maintained by imperialist arms in the heart of South-East Asia. The £100 million a year base of Singapore as the key citadel to dominate the entire region in the interests of British finance-capital. Here is the plain content beneath the mystic slogan 'East of Suez'.

Knight Errants of Sterling

'On no account can we relax in Malaya', proclaimed Sir Anthony Eden as Tory Prime Minister on May 12, 1955; 'it is our principal

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dollar earner'. The cat is here released from the bag. The pretences of benevolent enlightened colonialism are thrown on one side. The Malayan war is a plain business venture. Year after year the dollar surplus earned by Malaya went to pay for the dollar imports surplus owed by Britain. 'It is Malaya's dollar earnings which keep the sterling area afloat', wrote the *Manchester Guardian* on December 13, 1950. Therefore this whole strategy becomes a bipartisan strategy. It was a Labour Government which began the Malayan War and conducted its most cruel phases, with the concentration camps placing 650,000 behind barbed wire, the starvation drives and head hunters. It was the succeeding Tory Government which continued the war and invented 'Malaysia'. It was the prophet (in his latest incarnation) of the miracles of the new capitalism and smooth evolutionary socialism without the pains of communism, John Strachey, who as Minister of War let himself be photographed in uniform, rifle in hand, in the jungles of Malaya, stalking the patriots of the national liberation movement, as if he were some Nazi terrorist gauleiter in Occupied Europe. Was there, then, some psychological terrorist strand in his nature to make him take on such a rôle? Not at all. In personal relations he was the mildest, most good-tempered and affable of human beings, spinning an ever changing variety of political theories from the unstable abundance of his imagination. It was the logic of reformism, the inexorable logic of the supposedly beautiful 'new democratic capitalism', in reality, modern monopoly capitalism or imperialism, which led to this outcome. The merciless logic of historical reality strips in the end all pretences, tears away the painted flesh and lays bare the grim skeleton. The same assumed necessity in the cause of sterling, which drove Attlee, which drove Bevin, which drove Strachey, which drove Eden, is now also impaling Wilson and Stewart and Healey in its clutches.

Boomerang of the Balance of Payments

But here arises the paradox of the present situation. For the sake of sterling, for the sake of the balance of payments it is proclaimed that Britain must at all costs hold on to Malaya and South-East Asia. Otherwise, it is proclaimed, all would be lost; the balance of payments would be wrecked; sterling would collapse. But now a point has been reached when the ever mounting costs of the endeavour to hold on to South-East Asia, of the overseas military expenditure centred especially on Singapore and Aden, have brought

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the balance of payments into extreme deficit and threaten the stability of sterling. The effort to save sterling wrecks sterling. This contradiction found characteristic expression in the two utterances, quoted at the beginning of these Notes, of that ineffable echo of current commonplaces, Woodrow Wyatt, M.P., when in 1952 he proclaimed that withdrawal of our troops from Malaya would mean disaster for the balance of payments ('What would happen to our balance of payments if we had to take our troops out of Malaya?') and in 1965 denounced across a screaming page of the *Sunday Mirror* the 'lunatic' policy of keeping troops overseas ('If we'd had no troops overseas, we would have no balance of payments crisis'). A point has been reached when the medicine only ministers to the disease. The hoped for rock of salvation has become the rock on which the ship threatens to founder. It is time to change the course.

Ministerial Dilemmas

This contradiction at every turn is characteristic of the stage now reached in the deepening crisis of British imperialism. The Tory Opposition and press is fond of accusing the Labour Government of 'indecision'—a slightly comic charge in the mouths of the representatives of the previous Tory Government. But in fact the so-called 'indecision' is a completely understandable reflection of the sharpness of the dilemmas of the present situation. It is a reflection of the increasing difficulty of trying to straddle both sides of the class struggle. The Wilson Labour Government is endeavouring to pursue simultaneously five essentially incompatible objectives. First, they are committed to maintain as the foundation stone of their policy all the obligations of Nato, the cold war, the American military alliance, Britain's dominant position 'East of Suez', and all the military requirements arising from these objectives. Second, they are under the imperative necessity to overcome the deficit in the balance of payments arising from the above commitments, and for this purpose, alongside strangling taxes on trade and increased interest rates, desperately seek ways to reduce the mounting arms expenditure and overseas military costs. Third, they are pledged to a programme of domestic expansion, in order to reach a higher growth rate, which would require lower interest rates and increased credit facilities in place of the higher interest rates and credit squeeze imposed by the requirements of the battle against the deficit on the balance of payments. Fourth, they are under the opposite necessity, arising from the economic situation, to impose cuts in home consumption and

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for this purpose to increase taxation beyond the amount required to pay for the domestic reforms introduced. Finally, they are faced with the problem of squaring all this with maintaining the support of the working class and appeasing the openly expressed dissatisfaction of key sections of workers affected by the cuts they seek to impose, as in the case of the aircraft workers or the coalminers. This does not mean that these problems are insoluble. But they are insoluble within the framework of the premises which the Government so far still seeks to maintain. These contradictions are the indication that a radical change of policy is necessary.

2. *Aircraft Industry*

Take the case of the aircraft industry as the most conspicuous immediate demonstration of these dilemmas. Last month we examined the question of coal and oil as the expression of the present stage of the crisis of British imperialism and its effects on the entire economy. No less glaring is the present situation in the aircraft industry, in which Britain has so long played a pioneering rôle. On February 2 the Government announced its decisions on the hotly debated projects of military planes and the future of the industry: (1) to scrap the P 1154 and HS 681; (2) to postpone decision on the TSR 2, while pointing out that its costs would be £750 million; (3) to purchase in place of the scrapped British planes American planes at a cost, according to the statement the same day by the U.S. Defence Department, of £232 million, to be covered by a 7-year loan at 4¾ per cent; (4) to consider joint plans for civil plane construction projects with the United States or France.

Worst of All Possible Worlds

It is not difficult to see the reasoning and careful weighing of pros and cons which led the Government to this decision, and which were very adequately explained in the speeches of Jenkins and Jay. But it is also evident, as the sequel has abundantly shown, that by these decisions the Government has won the worst of all possible worlds. First, the Tory offensive has been given the most favourable opportunity to thump the supposedly patriotic drum (a distinctly dubious sound from the Fultonite purchasers of Polaris and artificers of Nassau), and to denounce in highly rhetorical terms the abandonment of the British aircraft industry and 'policy of surrender' (Amery). Second, over a quarter of a million of the most highly skilled and highly organised workers in Britain, and a key bastion

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of Labour support, find their future security in danger, and many thousands rendered redundant, and march in public protest demonstrations, which are at once highly publicised by the Tory press (usually so silent about popular protest demonstrations) with an endeavour to distort and misrepresent the real objectives of the demonstration. Third, the Government incurs the odium of scrapping British planes to buy American planes. Fourth, an extra charge of £232 million in dollar costs is added to the already considerable deficit on the balance of payments, and is added by the same Government which is preaching so vociferously to others to do everything to diminish that deficit.

A Footnote on the Balance of Payments

Incidentally, it is worth noting, as recorded in an inconspicuous paragraph on *The Times* City page on February 8, that the increase of Bank Rate by 2 per cent has had the result, through the increased interest requiring to be paid on foreign holdings in London, that it has 'added a substantial new burden to the U.K. balance of payments', calculated by *The Times* as equivalent to an annual rate of £625 million a year. Labours of Sisyphus, Mr. Callaghan? No wonder there is conflict between the expansionist plans of Mr. Brown and the deflationary objectives of Mr. Callaghan.

Confederation Demands

The problem of the future of the aircraft industry is not a simple one. It is tied up with the whole misdirection of Britain's resources and skilled man-power involved in the present arms programme, as well as the vast expenditure involved in new technological developments. At the outset it is essential to expose and smash the Tory offensive, which has nothing in common with the demands of the trade union and labour movement. The true objective of the Tory offensive was revealed from the Front Bench by Julian Amery in the parliamentary debate on February 2, when he said that the Government should have been willing 'to postpone some desirable reforms or even increase taxation so that the aircraft industry could be kept going'. Already £535 million of public money goes to the big aircraft firms. How much of this goes into the profiteers' pockets the Ferranti scandal has suggested. The Tory programme is to cut social reforms and increase taxes in order to pour more money into the big private aircraft monopolies for senseless and costly military projects. To which they are now adding the hangman's noose of the Common Market. The demands of the workers, on the other hand,

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found expression in the resolution of the Confederation Executive on February 1, moved by the A.E.U. and unanimously adopted.

A Positive Policy for the Aircraft Industry

What are these essential demands? First, that any plan should be within the framework of the general aim of reducing military expenditure, as made then in the Confederation resolution, corresponding to the T.U.C. statement. Second, that any military planes required within such a reduced programme should be built in Britain and not in America. Third, that in place of subsidising the private monopolies with hundreds of millions of pounds of public money the aircraft industry should be nationalised, and the public moneys devoted to it used for the purpose of building up a civil aircraft industry capable of meeting home needs and successfully competing for export. Fourth, that any workers temporarily deprived of existing jobs during this redeployment of the aircraft, electronics and engineering industry should be assured of alternative jobs at comparable rates, and should receive adequate financial compensation until such jobs are found (at present there does not yet exist in the aircraft industry any collective agreement for a corresponding system of severance compensation comparable even with that which has been won in the nationalised mines and railway industry). Such a programme needs to be pressed upon the Labour Government. In face of such a programme the Tory offensive will find no comfort.

Honour to the Fifty-Six

The economic fight of the aircraft workers, of the miners and of the railwaymen cannot be separated from the indispensable political fight to win a different use of Britain's resources and man-power, and end the present waste, distortion of the economy and mis-direction of effort arising from the reactionary cold war and colonialist policies of colossal arms expenditure and overseas military adventures. That is why so much importance attaches to the courageous public stand of the fifty-six Labour M.P.s, who signed the motion, despite the pressure from the Whips, or the telegram in response to the appeal of the Californian Democratic representatives, opposing the policy of support for the colonialist war in Vietnam and demanding a British-Soviet initiative to reconvene the Geneva Conference powers with a view to arranging a cease-fire, withdrawal of foreign invading military forces and 'advisers', military neutralisation of the whole of Vietnam and the right of 'both parts of Vietnam to decide their own

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social structure and mutual relations without outside interference'. When we consider how many of the total number of Labour M.P.s are now either in the Government or officially attached to the Government in one or another capacity, this number of fifty-six, voicing what they describe as 'virtually the unanimous desire of the entire British people', is not inconsiderable. This is the most significant development in the parliamentary field of the advance of the fight of the political labour movement since the general election, and the counterpart of the parallel stirring of the fight all over the country, which will receive further reflection in the C.N.D. marches being organised for Easter. The advance of this fight is the path forward to win the changes in policy which are indispensable for the future of the whole labour movement.

R.P.D.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

THE GOLD STANDARD

'Splendid', said all the economists and bankers; 'the gold is coming back. Now we can recover'. The pound rose, in common with the other European currencies. Between July and December, 1924, the pound rose from $4.40 to $4.73. . . But on what was this return based? This is the question that brings us to the centre of the position. Was it based on any increase in British economic strength? . . . On the contrary the visible adverse balance of trade was higher than ever and touched a record figure of £341 millions as against £203 millions in 1923 and £171 millions in 1922, an increase of 100 per cent in two years, and 116 per cent above the pre-war figure. . . Thus the advance in the pound was completely artificial. It was simply the reflection of the American flow of capital abroad. . . It means that in fact no solution has been reached . . . unless the whole trade and production relations of Europe and America have been reversed in the interval (so that Europe exports to America more goods than America exports to Europe—a many hundred reversal of trade), the gold standard must crash and with it the whole restoration. This is a simple mathematical necessity.

(From 'Notes of the Month', *Labour Monthly*, March, 1925.)

'I remember a prominent lecturer at London University coming into my flat one day in the autumn of 1931, just after Britain had gone off the gold standard. "To think", he said, with extreme bitterness, "to think that I should live to see R.P.D.'s Notes coming true".'

(John Strachey, *Fifteen Years of the Labour Monthly*, July, 1936.)

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ENGINEERS' 'PACKAGE DEAL'

Councillor Arnold E. Henderson

Member of the Glasgow District Committee of the A.E.U. and Shop Steward.

THE engineers' 'Package Deal' wage agreement has aroused angry discussions and argument throughout the industry, and this is not surprising considering its terms. It can be said that this is one of the worst agreements ever made and one wonders how any responsible trade union leader could possibly have accepted the conditions laid down in it. Even at this early stage the employers' 'interpretation' is creating a furious reaction from factories where claims for wage increases have been submitted.

The underlying dangers in the 'Deal' can be seen in the first two paragraphs of the Preamble to the Agreement:

> (1) The parties . . . recognise that the provisions of this Agreement, particularly the reduction in normal weekly hours to 40, reinforce the need for the maximum utilisation of all production resources and the most effective deployment and use of man-power. They agree that restrictions on the economic utilisation and transfer of labour which are not based on considerations of skill or ability to do the job are contrary to the well-being of the Industry and should be eliminated.
>
> (2) The parties re-state . . . that any questions which arise should be settled in accordance with the Provisions for Avoiding Disputes contained in the National Procedure Agreement without prior stoppage of work or departure from normal working. The Employers welcome the greater use now made of the Procedure as the medium for settling disputes; the Unions re-affirm their intention of ensuring that this practice is maintained.

These paragraphs show what lies behind the 'Package Deal': interchangeability of labour, and the continuance of the 'York Memorandum', something the trade unions have been trying to end for many years. No mention of curtailment of profits or dividends! Never has an agreement been concluded with such speed. Could it be that George Brown's 'Declaration of Intent' had some connection with the haste to accept the employers' ultimatum? The workers concerned were not given any opportunity to express opinions on the contents.

Some attempt had to be made to give a positive appearance to the agreement and this is covered by two extra days' holiday a year in two instalments; payment for holidays raised from the consolidated time rate plus one-sixth to the rate plus one-third; and increased wages for lower-paid workers—raised at six-monthly inter-

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vals over a period of three years. In total these will amount to: skilled workers, 36s.; intermediate grades, 33s.; unskilled, 30s.; adult females, 42s. There are also increases for apprentices, boys and youths. *They will affect about one engineer in ten.* In the three-year period there will be two general increases of 5s. a week for men. No general increase will be paid in 1965.

The last wage increase was in November 1963. *The first 5s. is to be March 1966—two years and four months later.* There was a 4·8 per cent rise in the cost of living in the first 11 months of 1964. The increase for the general skilled workers in 1966/67 will be less than 2½ per cent. Much play is being made in respect of the increase for adult females, and no-one will deny that their equal pay claim is long overdue—but in this agreement even after six supplements of 7s. it will still be nearly £1 a week less than the male labourers' rate. And piecework earnings are to be calculated on the present rate after the 40-hour week starts, breaking the principle of no loss of pay.

One of the worst features of this agreement is that for the next three years there must be no national or local claims of a general character; of a sectional character covering a section of industry; of an occupational character covering a specific occupation; or of a domestic character covering all or the great majority of workers at an establishment. Only claims for individuals or groups based on inequities or anomalies are to be allowed. It must also be pointed out that women or youths whose factory rate or piecework supplements bring them substantially above the minimum will not get anything. This means, as a consequence, that most will get nothing, as they are already above these minimums. Federated firms are warned against giving rises outside or above the agreement. These provisions are obviously directed against the militancy and organisation of the workers at workshop level in pursuing legitimate claims. As 'Charles Timaeus' in the *Sunday Citizen* stated 'the unions have agreed to try and stop the factory bargaining that pushes up earnings'.

Another clause in the Agreement merits close scrutiny:

> It is the spirit and intention of this Agreement that improvements in wages and working conditions during the period of its operation shall be related to the growth which the Industry is expected to achieve and should be confined to those which normally take place arising from increased productivity in the Industry, coupled with those expressly provided for in the Agreement itself.

Remembering that the bosses still run industry, a recent statement of Lord Plowden to the three big employers' organisations is well worthy of note:

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> The Government should be prepared to stand up and say it welcomes any steps toward better use of the labour force and that it recognises *this will lead to increased transitional unemployment. This is what we mean when we say that we want increased productivity and why should we be mealy-mouthed about it.*

Referring to the Cost of Living a clause in the Agreement reads:

> If there is an increase of five points or more in the Index of Retail Prices during the period of twelve months from January 4, 1965, and this increase is maintained for three consecutive months within such twelve months' period or if such an increase takes place and is similarly maintained in either of the succeeding twelve months' periods, the Unions shall be released from the restriction imposed.

If this formula had been applied over the past eight years no wage revisions could have been called for by the unions! Again written into the Agreement this safeguard for the employers:

> If during the period of this Agreement, legislation relating to industrial employment adds seriously to costs, the Federation shall have the right to call for a revision of the Agreement.

Legislation being considered by the Labour Government covers increased employers' contributions under the insurance scheme and an agreement for severance pay! What a fraudulent set-up this is, and forced upon the workers without their consideration or consent. As has been stated by the General Secretary of the Foundry Workers this agreement was imposed on many Unions on a 'take it or leave it' basis, before they had time to consider its full implications.

At the negotiations with the employers, on September 22, 1964, on the shorter working week, Sir William Carron stated: 'To suggest now, therefore, that the operation should be spread over a period of three years is just not serious negotiation in our view. We could not really look at the proposition unless it was to be concluded within a few months'. A complete change of front in a few months.

Profits in Engineering (excluding shipbuilding) for the first eleven months of 1964 were £90·1 million higher than 1963. They rose from £639·7 million in the first eleven months of 1963 to £729·8 million in the same period of 1964. This agreement permits the employers to continue to increase profits and prices as they wish. few months—a capitulation to the bosses' pressure.

This Agreement should be repudiated by the workers and demands made instead for a straight substantial increase in wages. Living in a capitalist economy the welfare and prosperity of all workers depends on their strength and unity to extract the maximum return for his labour from the profits he creates.

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HOW TO FIGHT PRICE RISES

J. R. Campbell

IF a group of capitalists in control of certain commodities think that the situation is favourable for extracting increased prices from the public they simply go ahead and increase them. There is no preliminary warning to the public, and, as a rule, no intelligible explanation for the rise and, of course, neither time nor opportunity is given to those who would like to protest. Contrast this with the situation of workers seeking an increase in wages or salaries. Their unions at national or local level have to conduct prolonged negotiations, with the press commenting how selfish and inopportune it is for engineers, railwaymen, or textile workers to be seeking for wage increases at this particular time. Tens of thousands of articles, and editorials are written every year on this theme. Hardly one is ever written against employers who increase their prices unless of course the employer happens to be a nationalised industry.

Bourgeois economists frequently argue that it is necessary to stress wage increases because they always come first and lead to increased prices and, if wage awards were moderated then price increases would be the exception rather than the rule. The events of last November and December, when there was a spate of price increases particularly in relation to food, show how false this is. The increase of workers' earnings in food processing industries was below the average and afforded no justification for the price increases which were taking place. So a great array of new excuses were brought forward, such as the petrol tax, the possibility of new taxation in the Budget, the coming increase in employers' contributions to national insurance. The latter excuse was particularly significant. For years the employers have been complaining about the burden which the financing of social insurance was placing on industry. Now it emerges that the employers always aim to pass their national insurance contributions on to the consumer in the form of increased prices. Let us hope the Labour Party grasps this.

The fact is that in a situation of monopoly, or near monopoly, firms are watching all the time for opportunities of pushing up prices. The economy was booming just before Christmas and when the big firms moved to increase prices, all the others followed. The costs of these firms were not necessarily increasing to the extent that they pretended. There was a high level of demand, and, when that situation is present in monopoly capitalism, firms push up prices irrespec-

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tive of what is happening to their own costs. Some of them were, of course, anticipating that Mr. George Brown might be setting up some kind of price review body and that one might as well push up prices before anything happened. Their representatives had signed a statement of intent promising to keep prices stable, but it is noteworthy that under the Government's National Board for Prices and Incomes employers are allowed to put up prices without stating justification, while unions can be questioned on the validity of their wage claims before or during negotiations. The rotten class bias in these arrangements should be evident to all.

It is not much use trying to stop this sort of thing by reviewing price rises after they have taken place as Mr. Brown proposes. The large firms involved could drag out such enquiries indefinitely seeking to blind the price 'reviewers' with carefully prepared statistics. The problem must be tackled the other way round. No increase in prices should be permitted at all. Certain traditional excuses for increasing prices such as that wages or taxes have increased should not be entertained. Employers should be told that if private enterprise is as efficient as they say it is, they ought to be increasing their productivity year after year and should be able to absorb increases in wages. One of the curiosities of the furore about prices last November and December was that the capitalist press, which is always carping about the alleged restrictive practices of the workers, and sometimes criticises the general inefficiency of British industry, on the whole approved of the excuses being advanced for increased prices. Yet surely it is the ease with which British industry, sheltered behind high tariffs (not to speak of the surcharge) can 'pass on' increases of costs that is one of the causes of this relative inefficiency.

In the period of monopoly capitalism, price competition has been damped down and most prices are 'administered'. In most industries there are large firms which are the recognised 'price leaders', and who set the tone. Let the Government agencies take a tight grip of the price fixing of these firms and it will be easier to influence all the others. Prices of producer as well as consumer goods should be supervised in this fashion. The same applies to prices in the large multiple retail firms and in the supermarkets. These latter tend to create deliberate confusion by announcing a handful of price reductions while keeping quiet on those prices that are being pushed up. The Government must compile a genuine index of price changes in these establishments and instruct them to hold prices and quality steady. The Government ought to tell us what has happened to the

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abolition of retail price maintenance. In 1963 when the bill was going through Parliament the air was thick with prophecies of cut prices and of ruin for traders yet, judging from the price increases last year, very little is happening.

One of the most ludicrous of Mr. Brown's activities was the appeal to the Trade Associations on prices for it is usually such bodies which are concerned with ensuring that increases in costs are passed on. Not that their members are always categorically instructed to increase their prices. A nod is always as good as a wink in British industry. Information is passed round that many firms are in favour of some increase and up goes the prices in response. Whether you call it price fixing or dissemination of market information, all these practices ought to be stopped. There should be an investigation from time to time of the cost of production of some representative firms, including the costs of advertising and packaging. There are those who argue that advertising tends to reduce prices. It creates, they say, a mass demand for some new commodities enabling them to be mass produced, thus enabling costs of production to be kept down. This certainly does not apply to the type of advertising which boosts one brand of cigarettes as against another.

There must be the closest possible control of house prices and standards of construction, whether the houses are built for individuals or councils. This must, of course, include the control of building material prices. In relation to housing, the question of interest rates is of the utmost importance. We do not need second-hand Treasury lectures to the effect that the Government cannot reduce interest rates across the entire economy until the economic situation is a lot more favourable. It can, however, selectively reduce the interest on housing loans and on mortgages for new housing and make clear that it regards this as a first step.

If the Government were seriously concerned with holding down prices it would make its own direct contribution. There has just been a round of increases in electricity charges, not because the nationalised industry could not supply power cheaper but because the late Tory government had ordered it to make higher profits and to plough back more for the capital development of the industry. In other words the present-day consumer is being asked to pay more for his electricity in order that the future consumers should pay less. There is poetic justice in this, for the big capitalist firms have been getting their electricity at ultra-cheap rates from the industry and then shouting that nationalisation is a failure. But there is a case

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for discrimination here. Prices to the domestic consumer should not be allowed to rise. There is also a case for increasing post office charges but the Government should refrain from doing so meantime. If a struggle against price rises is to be carried out the Government must act consistently. Further the rôle of indirect taxation in pushing up prices must be recognised. In 1961 and 1965 the retail price index rose by five points—the two largest increases in the last ten years. Selwyn Lloyd's regulator taxes in the little budget of July 1961 and Maudling's increased taxation on tobacco and drink in 1964 made their contribution to these increases. The Labour government would be making its own contribution to reducing prices if it cut indirect taxation and got the means to do so by cutting arms expenditure.

These measures can only be carried through in a struggle against the monopolists. The whole basis of Government policy is, however, class co-operation. The famous Statement of Intent is based on 'Government, management, and unions co-operating in a spirit of mutual confidence'. In short the monopolists are expected to co-operate in an attack on monopoly price fixing. The representatives of management will co-operate in making statements of intent but not in positive operational measures against higher prices. The immediate anti-monopoly measures we suggest are not a substitute for an all-out attack against Big Business but they are the starting point of a struggle which will prepare the ground for such an attack.

The class co-operation policy is putting the Labour Government in an impossible position. The Government cannot suggest the tiniest genuine reform on behalf of the workers but it arouses the fiercest opposition and the grossest misrepresentation of the monopolists. Yet the control apparatus that it is building has representatives of the monopolists at every key point. No wonder the Government gives an air of feckless, hopeless vacillation. It is trying to serve two masters and the monopolist master is determined to make it plain he will only co-operate on his own terms. Thus it is being pushed to complete political bankruptcy and to defeat in a General Election.

It is time for the working class movement to intervene, to demand a fight against all monopoly activities, to demand the scrapping of the class co-operation machines, which hamper this fight. That is the only way that the genuine (if exceedingly limited) reforms in the General Election programme can be achieved and the movement rallied to back more sweeping changes and to defeat the Tories decisively whenever the General Election comes.

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REVOLUTION IN BRITISH AGRICULTURE

John Monck

THE trends revealed in the tables of U.S. statistics, quoted by Jurgen Kuczynski in his article in the January issue of *Labour Monthly*, could be more or less duplicated in the advanced European countries and especially in Britain. At the Oxford Farming Conference held in January, 1965, Paul Chambers, Chairman of Imperial Chemical Industries, painted this picture of British agriculture:

> Agriculture is a highly capitalised industry. Taking into account land and buildings as well as plant and machinery, farming in 1960 had fixed assets of £6,500 an employee, whereas all manufacturing industries together had only £2,100. Even if land and buildings were excluded, agriculture still had £3,500 an employee and was still well above manufacturing industries as a whole. The amount of new capital formation annually was also higher in agriculture—about £180 an employee in 1963 against £118 in manufacturing industry. If we look at this increase in output per man in the period 1948-1962, we find that it is no less than 84 per cent in agriculture as against 36 per cent for manufacture as a whole, including agriculture.*

Despite this increase in output, leaders of the farming industry warned this conference of impending world food shortages. But not *The Times*, which in its leading article on agriculture on January 26, headed 'Too Simple an Argument', concluded: 'A policy of expanding home production merely as an insurance against food shortages for which the evidence is scanty is not one that commends itself'. This authentic overtone of traditional British Capital, echoes back to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain at Kettering on July 2, 1938, under the shadow of impending war: 'I have seen it said that we ought ourselves to grow at home all the food that we need, and I want to give you a reason or two why I think that is a wrong point of view . . . The idea that we can be starved out in war seems to

*It is necessary to break down the figures given by Paul Chambers to find out whether such investments are economically viable, and what movement within the farming industry are hidden within them. It is well known that British farming is the most highly mechanised in the world. But if tractors, the units of power, are taken as an indication of the basis of mechanisation, there were in Great Britain in 1961 over 400,000 divided between 398,500 holdings. But of these holdings, only 16,871 were over 300 acres, while over 308,000 were under 100 acres, 263,000 under 50 acres and nearly 83,000 under 5 acres. Thus it is seen that the smaller the holding the greater the investment per acre in machinery; while the larger the holding, not only is the machinery investment per acre less, but the output per £100 spent on machinery greater. This disparity in economic expenditure becomes clearer when it is realised that every tractor must have its complement of implements to operate. It is doubtful whether any set of machinery can be fully utilised on holdings under 100-150 acres. This is one of the more powerful factors behind the drive to larger and ever larger units. Between 1952 and 1961, the number of holdings fell by over 57,000. Of these over 34,000 were under 100 acres. At the same time those over 300 acres rose in number by over 2,000. The vast majority of those holdings that disappeared were added to those over 300 acres. At the same time these figures hide the full extent of the changes, since no account is taken of the increase in multiple holdings.

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me entirely fallacious. We can depend upon the Royal Navy and the Mercantile Marines to keep open our trade routes and to enable us to import our food and raw materials indefinitely'. But the world of 1965 is not Mr. Chamberlain's world of 1938. Today in Britain, agriculturists and, belatedly, leading industrialists are realising the reality of this and are rightly alarmed by what they foresee.

But the underlying features of British agriculture need to be seen in some historical perspective. Our farms, their contours, hedges, ditches and soil variety inclusions, were largely laid out in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This country under the leadership of such men as Coke of Norfolk, Jethro Tull, Townsend, Arthur Young, etc., was the first to establish improved, modern and capitalist modes of farming, using the new tools and methods of the Industrial Revolution and at the same time transforming British agriculture from peasant and semi-feudal modes of land tenure and modes of production and distribution, into capitalist forms based on landlord/tenant relationship for cash. The land was divided into individual holdings and boundaries defined. The employment of labour on a wage basis, the marketing of the produce and the entire chain of ancillary industry and supply was set up from the implement manufacturer, through the farmer, to the merchandiser and to the urban consumer.

From about 1880 onwards, with the opening up of colonial territories, the exploitation of cheap labour, the export of capital and the development of the shipping industry, farming in Britain went into decline. The rate of development and the rate of investment slowed down while urban industry quickened and rapidly overtook farming both in rate of development and in quantity of investment; and labour productivity rapidly outpaced that of farming. Although it was agricultural labour that formed the first trade union, the trade union movement found its base and strength in the urban industrial proletariat. Britain had found cheaper and more profitable sources of food overseas. Moreover by filling their holds with cheap foods and importing them into this country, shipping could reduce the rates of transport in favour of industrial exports. But above all, food had become a major bargaining factor in the increasing competition for the world markets in home-produced capital and consumer commodities. Further, with the decline in British farming, wages failed to keep pace with industrial wages and the agricultural labourer was forced into the position of being used as a lever by capital against the demands of the urban industrial worker; and to such an extent

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INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIS

ON the occasion of the celebration of International Women's Da
Bureau of Socialist Women she was one of the organisers of the I
at this Conference that the following famous anti-war resolution was
Democratic Labour Party (Bolshevik):

> The present world war, which has caused so many calamities wherever it has been waged, has devastated and ruined Belgium and Galicia, and has destroyed thousands upon thousands of workers' lives, is an imperialist war, caused by the rivalry between the ruling classes of the several countries for the division of colonies and for predominance on the world markets, as well as by dynastic interests. . . .
>
> Not only does this war not to any extent serve the interests of the workers, but it serves as a weapon in the hands of the ruling classes for the destruction of the international solidarity of the workers, and for the weakening of their movement and the class struggle within each country.

The resolution went on to point out the 'utter disregard' by the majority of Socialist Parties of the guiding principles established at Stuttgart, Copenhagen and Basle and proclaimed that 'the proletarians of all countries have no other enemy but their class enemy'.

> The Conference declares war upon every imperialistic war, and at the same time states its belief that in order that this desire for peace may be transformed into a conscious political force, it is essential that the women workers should clearly realise that the propertied classes strive for nothing else than annexations, conquest, and domination, that in the epoch of imperialism wars are inevitable, and that imperialism threatens the whole world with an entire series of wars, unless the proletariat finds sufficient strength in itself to put an end to the capitalist order, by a complete overthrow of capitalism. If a working woman is anxious to shorten the period of sufferings which is connected with the epoch of imperialist wars, it is indispensable that her desire for peace turn into revolt and into struggle for Socialism. It is only through the revolutionary movement of the masses, through the strengthening and intensifying of the Socialist struggle, that the working woman will attain her end in this struggle. Her first duty is thus that of supporting the labour unions and Socialist organisations and of breaking the civil peace by fighting against war appropriations, against the participation in bourgeois cabinets, by supporting and encouraging fraternising among soldiers in the trenches and on the battlefield, by setting up illegal organisations wherever the government has repealed the constitutional liberties, and, finally, by drawing the masses into participation in demonstrations and revolutionary movements.
>
> The International Socialist Women's Conference appeals to the working women of all countries to start this struggle forthwith, to organise it on an international scale and to combine their action closely with that of those Socialists, who, like Liebknecht, fight in all countries against Nationalism and carry on a revolutionary Socialist struggle.

The resolution ended by reminding the women that their movement mi
impulse to the entire Socialist movement and will bring nearer the hour o

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7OMEN'S CONFERENCE 1915

ting that we honour the memory of Klara Zetkin. As Secretary of the nal Socialist Women's Conference held at Berne in March 1915. It was :d by the Delegation of the Central Committee of the Russian Social

the 'forerunner of a general action of the masses, which will give a new ete liberation'.

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that the agricultural worker found himself on the bottom rung of the wages ladder; in fact a second class citizen in relation to any other section of the community; a position from which he has been struggling to free himself during the last half century; from which he is struggling to free himself to this day.

But times are changing. Mechanisation has not only altered the nature of his work, but he has had to acquire new mechanical skills. Today the skills and ability of the agricultural worker have obliterated any difference between himself and an industrial worker, so that there is no justification, in the outlook of the trade union movement, for any wage differential between them.

During the last eighty years, two significant trends have taken shape. Firstly, despite the interruption of two world wars and the spectre of starvation due to the blockade of shipping and the urgent use of shipping tonnage to import the means of war. Britain became absolutely dependent on overseas imports for the maintenance of her standard of living, indeed for the maintenance of any kind of standard of living. British farming had first been allowed to decline in the interests of the major sectors of British capital, and later forcibly prevented from development by the same interests, despite the changing technological and capital position of farming due to the impetus of the second world war; and despite and in the very face of the changed position in the world of Britain as an exporting, trading and financial power. The second significant change was that, although farming declined, the ancillary industries, or what had been the ancillary industries of agriculture, did not. On the contrary they developed and usurped the position of farming and themselves became the agricultural industry, forcing down the farmers and finally kicking them out altogether, permitting their existence only as a source of further exploitation by themselves, selling to them retail and purchasing their produce from them at wholesale prices.

The present phase can be characterised by the struggle on the one hand between the monopolies that have developed within the ancillary industries, and on the other by the technological changes within the farming industry, permitting low cost production within a high cost price structure. This has resulted in the growth of large-scale farming leading towards monopoly, already to be seen in certain sectors, notably poultry. These changes in the farming structure are moving towards knockout blows against the small farmer and economically weaker placed farmers, towards monopoly-pro-

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ducer struggles with both monopoly-suppliers such as fertiliser manufacturers and with the monopoly-distributors such as the Supermarket chain stores. It is, at the same time leading towards accomodation and combination with them, for the joint exploitation of the consumer in their mutual interests. It seems that, for a time, these two patterns will continue in parallel. This present drive towards large-scale and very large-scale farming is likely to be extended to other sectors of the industry in the near future due to the pressure of the developing world food crisis, particularly the demand for and the shortage of proteins and animal products, especially meat.

This was commented upon by Dr. Mehren, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture speaking at the Oxford Farming Conference in January:

> With rising incomes and improved transport, processing and distribution of food, diets would become more varied. The shift from starchy foods such as grains and potatoes to livestock products overshadows all the rest. This shift appears to be universal. It provides a major basis to project oncoming change. . . Total meat conumption in the Common Market area is expected to rise by about 50 per cent during the present decade, and the trend was evident in every major European country. But meeting the demands would put severe pressure on relatively limited land resources, even allowing for expected technological progress.

The meat shortage had been commented upon earlier by the Chairman of British Oil and Cake Mills, reported in the *Farmers Weekly* of December 18, 1964:

> By 1972 Britain could well need a National Dairy Herd of about 5 million cows—1·7 million more than today—to supply enough calves for beef production . . . the world is short of protein . . . we would be unwise to ignore the fact that as the hungry nations develop their economies we can expect greater world demand for and trade in food.

The demand for protein foods is growing rapidly, without any corresponding increase in production. The present impetus stems from the necessity throughout Western Europe, to yield to the insistence by the organised working class for a higher standard of living; by the awakening in South and Central America of the working class and peasantry, highlighted by the example of Cuba; by the food needs of the ex-colonial countries of Africa in the development of their economies; by the struggle of the peoples of Asia to defeat the daily spectre of starvation, kindled by the example of the Soviet Union and China.

This developing food crisis is likely to be felt most severely in Britain where the standards have been largely maintained on the

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basis of massive imports of cheap foods. But world food prices are rising and shortages developing: a grim warning of the future for Britain occurred in the early summer of 1964 when Europe bought from us 40,000 tons of meat—what an ironic reversal of the pattern —and thereby created a serious though temporary disturbance of supplies in the shops. The need to increase home food production, not yet officially seen or accepted, will benefit, not the small producer, but those major operators with the necessary capital or able to command fresh capital from sources outside the farming industry, who will thus be in a position to exploit the new opportunities for the integration of farms into immense groupings. Higher prices will affect the consumer and depress the real value of wages, yet with no guarantee that such food production will reach the shops, should the new alignments within the agricultural and farming industry find it more profitable to sell abroad.

Technically the possibility exists to produce food in such abundance that starvation and hunger could be banished and only the memory of it remain as an historical fact. But the restriction of food production remains and is likely to continue as a major power factor in the hands of Capital to control wages, employment, and the advance of the peoples. Above all, the technical possibilities available to mankind, cannot be deployed without the necessary capital. This can never be available so long as we live in the spectre of war. Investment in food and the prodigious expenditure on war preparations, armaments and nuclear destruction, are irreconcilable. So long as the one continues, the other is impossible, and man is condemned to live not only within the shadows of war but also with the threat of hunger at his elbow. Peace and food are the twin problems of our time. The fight for food involves the fight for peace. The one cannot be won without the other. The final solution of the food problem depends on victory in the world struggle for peace and the abolition of all war preparations.

In the January issue of *Labour Monthly*, Jurgen Kuczynski wrote 'Modern Agriculture Under Capitalism' in which he traced the historical trends of American agriculture since 1843. He followed this in the February issue with 'Modern Agriculture Under Socialism'. Both these issues are available from 134, Ballards Lane, N.3.

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A SPEAKER'S CONFERENCE

D. N. Pritt, Q.C.

[*When long delayed electoral reform was precipitated in* 1918 *by the Russian Revolution it was preceded by a Speaker's Conference at which Proportional Representation, already then adopted in the National Union of Railwaymen and the Miners' Federation of Great Britain in their up-to-date constitutions, was accepted as the fairest and most democratic electoral method. It was killed by the House of Lords. After a quarter of a century the political parties had jointly taken steps backward. At the Speaker's Conference of* 1944 *it was only Megan Lloyd George and D. N. Pritt who put up a fight for Proportional Representation. It is with pleasure we print Pritt's exposure based on his experience.—Ed.*, L.M.]

IT seems probable that a 'Speaker's Conference' will be held in the near future. What is such a Conference designed to do?

Such conferences, composed of Members of Parliament of the three main parties in rough proportion to their representation in the House of Commons, plus two or three Peers (plus a sprinkling of independent M.P.s when such things existed), are ostensibly designed, if one judges by the precedents of 1918, 1928, and 1944, to examine the workings of our parliamentary democracy, to see if its machinery needs to be brought up-to-date or to be given more of an air of justice, and to make recommendations to Parliament accordingly. In particular, they should try to solve any problems arising out of developments in electoral methods. But what does one see if one looks a little deeper? The answer is: a demonstration of the essential features of the clever swindle called the 'two-party system', and its tacit assumption that the two main parties are both parts of the 'Establishment', accepting its sacro-sanctity and the tenets of parliamentary-democratic-monopoly-capitalist polity.

What is likely to happen when two (or two and a half) groups of professional politicians, whose desire to take the reins and sweets of government from one another from time to time is pretty well the only thing that brings them into conflict, get together in private to consider how best to bring up-to-date the machinery of their half-shadow boxing, whilst preserving an air of service to democratic principles and of genuine conflict? To judge by 1944, what is likely to happen is that there will be a series of bargains between the two main parties not unlike those of rival protection rackets parcelling out territory. In that year, when neither party knew what might happen in the next General Election, the Labour Party being unconfident and the Tories terrified lest something happen to dispose

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of all of them, the main points of the 'gangsters' agreement' were:

> The Tories agreed not to claim the immediate redistribution of a number of very small urban constituencies, mostly held by Labour (which on every democratic principle should have been redistributed at once);
>
> Labour agreed to leave the Tories in enjoyment of the business vote for the time (which on every democratic principle should have been abolished at once);
>
> Both teams agreed to defeat both Proportional Representation—the only known method of securing fair and democratic election results—and the alternative vote—the next best thing—in order to secure that neither the Liberals nor the Communists should get fair representation in Parliament.

Thus did these two teams, with nice clean hands, go into the great post-war battle for the future of their country, in a field kept clear of all other forces, to see which of them was to have the main say in arranging the democratic principles for its own future advantage.

With that rather discouraging precedent for what may happen if a new Speaker's Conference is held, let me examine the important question why one is likely to be held. One reason, perhaps not the most important, is the virtual deadlock-result of the last Election (it is odd that the present electoral system, defended by its supporters and beneficiaries on the ground that it avoids the deadlocks which they say would arise from Proportional Representation, in fact gives us a high proportion of deadlocks, plus absurdities such as a 'victory' for the party polling fewer votes than its opponent). The more important reason, to my mind, is that the developments of propaganda machinery and methods have by now made nonsense of the legislation prescribing limits for election expenditure, to the disadvantage of the Labour Party (and to the frustration of common honesty and democracy). In the old days, when each candidate fought his election locally, with his own forces, and little help from party headquarters beyond the loan of a few speakers and the supply of pamphlets at a cheap rate, the limitation of expenses had a good deal of reality, and saved us at any rate from the days of 'Eatanswill', when terrific sums were paid for seats. But for over half a century the old craftsmanship has, so to speak, been displaced by factory methods; that is, more and more of the real effective vote-getting is done centrally, mainly by television. At the beginning of the century, one could see the start of the new system, when the centrally-financed propaganda of the Tariff Reform League was carried on all over the country—Oh! No!, not for the Tory Party, but only for what happened to be the main plank of its policy. A good deal later, the 'Mr. Cube' campaign worked in the same way—Oh! No! not against the Labour Party, but only against a main plank of its policy. But the

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full flood of destruction came with the powerful central weapon of television, shared out by agreement between the B.B.C. and the political parties which support the establishment, and rendering to every candidate help which would have cost him many times the permissible limit of constituency expenditure (whilst the old-fashioned central propaganda such as that of Mr. Cube can also continue). The mental gymnastics involved in defeating Hugh McDiarmid's claim that the broadcasts by Sir Relic helped the election of Sir Relic at the last General Election illustrate the oddity of the position.

These destructive developments were seen in the offing by the Speaker's Conference of 1944, which (apart from some suggestion of stopping broadcasts from abroad) avoided making recommendations about broadcasting 'owing to the impossibility of forecasting future developments'; and the Committee on Electoral Law Reform, set up at the end of 1944 and reporting in December 1947, although charged expressly to consider broadcasting among other problems, went no further. In truth, no one has yet officially faced the problem.

So there will very likely be a Speaker's Conference. How will it be composed? Precedent suggests perhaps 12 Labour M.P.s, 11 or 12 Tories, one Liberal, and two or three Peers. Will they behave with any more real regard for democracy than their 1944 predecessors? I can't quite see why one should expect them to do so; they will quite surely still want to 'dish' the Communists and the Liberals.

They will, however, be forced in common decency to devise some method of charging central activity on to the constituencies, or of prohibiting all central expenditure, by anyone, beyond a certain fixed sum; the Labour Party will probably be eager to do something of the sort, since they and their supporters probably have less money to spend. And both sides, probably, will want to make a show of readiness to 'preserve democracy'; it would be dangerous to destroy the myth that the country is ruled by the electorate, in that at least once every five years each of us can vote for one of two or three candidates which most of us had little to say in choosing and whose policies many of us dislike. If they go on letting elections be decided by the power of the purse, and the tongue and television smirk that have the purse, they may be removed more swiftly than they fear.

WINSTON CHURCHILL (stating the B.B.C. was wrong to seek to regulate its political broadcasts through the political parties): 'I was not aware that parties had a legal basis at all, or that they had been formally brought into your licence'. (1929.)

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BRITISH GUIANA: ELECTIONS AND AFTER

Neville Annibourne

General Secretary, Progressive Youth Organisation, British Guiana.

THE General Election in British Guiana of December 7, 1964, has come and gone, and according to one American newspaper, everyone has lost. Each of the three parties of the1961 elections predicted an overall victory. The People's Progressive Party (P.P.P.) gained 46 per cent of the votes, the People's National Congress (P.N.C.) 40 per cent and the United Force (U.F.) 12 per cent. The splinter parties formed to split the P.P.P. polled only 1½ per cent of the total valid votes.

The British Tory Government had clearly stated that the imposition of the system of proportional representation would bring about a broad based Government representative of all the major sections of the community. And the political opposition in British Guiana, in their advocacy for proportional representation, had argued that no single party would win an absolute majority and thus the two major parties would be forced to work together. Neither objective has been achieved. What was said, however, was not what was meant. For the colonialists and imperialists, the objective of the election was twofold. Firstly, to remove the P.P.P. from the Government; and secondly, to smash it as a party. The first objective was achieved by the installation of a coalition Government of the P.N.C. and the U.F. This Government, with the help of its Anglo-American backers, will now set about to achieve the second objective which the election failed to do. Twice within a decade the Guianese people have suffered betrayal. In 1953, the Tory Government of Sir Winston Churchill with gun-boat diplomacy smashed the constitution and forcibly removed the P.P.P. Government after only 133 days in office. Ten years later in 1963, the job of hatcheting the national aspirations of the Guianese people fell on Churchill's son-in-law, Mr. Duncan Sandys, with the approval of the Tory Macmillan and Home Governments. Sandys rigged the constitution by changing the electoral system from our traditional and British first-past-the-post method to that of proportional representation.

The rôle of the British Labour Party in Guianese affairs has been a dubious one. In the 1953 suspension, the Labour Party spoke in brave words when the gun-boats were despatched but completely backslid with the introduction of a 'tepid' amendment in the debate

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in the House of Commons. Ten years later, history seems to be repeating itself. In opposition, the Labour Party spoke in brave terms. Mr. Harold Wilson, as Leader of the Opposition, in a debate in the House of Commons in July 1964, attacked the Tory Government for the 'fiddled Constitutional arrangement' and suggested that a Commonwealth Mission should be sent out to British Guiana to help work out a solution. When in Office, one of the first acts of the Labour Government was its refusal to postpone the election and to appoint a Commonwealth Mission.

That the British Government has refused to honour its commitments has been due, no doubt, to U.S. dictation. According to the *New York Times* of October 31, 1964, the British Government 'bowing to United States wishes has ruled out early independence for Guyana' and decided to go ahead with the election fixed for December 7. United States wishes were made known in the talks in Washington between the Foreign Secretary, then Mr. Patrick Gordon Walker, and the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Dean Rusk. 'Mr. Rusk left Mr. Walker in no doubt that the U.S. would resist a rise of British Guiana as an independent Castro-type state.' That the British Labour Government was prepared to succumb so completely and so soon to American dictation is regrettable.

United States involvement in the affairs of British Guiana has been noted for some time. United States cold war pre-occupations and anti-Castro hysteria have led to U.S. interference in the domestic affairs of British Guiana. This has been noted by many observers. In a House of Commons debate in 1964, Jenny Lee and Bob Edwards, pointed accusing fingers in the direction of the United States. Even Tory M.P. Ian McLeod, former Secretary of State for the Colonies, attacked the United States for meddling, Since 1961, U.S. citizens, Government officials and agents of the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) have been very active in British Guiana. Forty-five thousand dollars were spent by the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade to defeat the P.P.P. during the 1961 election campaign. During the 1962 and 1963 disturbances, American Agents were active. It is estimated that the 1963 strike fomented by the T.U.C. and aided and abetted by the I.C.F.T.U. was financed to the extent of over one hundred thousand dollars weekly from American sources. So bare-faced and shameless has been the American involvement that one of the senior officials of the State Department, Mr. William Tyler, speaking before a Congressional Sub-Committee, blatantly admitted that the U.S. Government was out of sympathy with the

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Jagan Government and would like to see it out of office.

That words were put into deeds was clearly pin-pointed by the American columnist Drew Pearson on March 22, 1964. Charging that U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and British Intelligence were behind the disturbances and disorders of 1963, he wrote:

> The U.S. permitted Cuba to go Communist purely through default and diplomatic bungling. The problem now is to look ahead and make sure we don't make the same mistake again. We are already on the way to making it in Haiti. But in British Guiana, President Kennedy, having been burnt in the Bay of Pigs operation, did look ahead. . . . But London was added to the itinerary only because of Kennedy's haunting worry that British Guiana would get its independence from England in July, 1963, and set up another Communist government under the guidance of Fidel Castro. If this happened just before the Presidential Elections of 1964 and if at that time a Communist Guiana began seizing the Reynolds metals aluminium operation and other American properties, Kennedy knew the political effect would be disastrous.
>
> It wasn't in the communique issued by the U.S. and England after the Kennedy-Macmillan meeting, but the main thing they agreed on was that the British would refuse to grant independence to Guiana because of the general strike against pro-communist Prime Minister Cheddi Jagan. The strike was secretly inspired by a combination of U.S. Central Intelligence Agency money and British Intelligence. It gave London the excuse it wanted. British Guiana has not yet received its independence.

More recently, the Americans have made it no secret that they have been financing the election campaign and two papers for the opposition parties.

Propaganda, force and fraud have been the main weapons used to remove the P.P.P. from the Government. Opposition-fomented disturbances of 1962 and 1963 were used as excuses for imposing the fiddled constitutional arrangement of proportional representation. In addition election irregularities were indulged in. The election machinery was completely taken away from the Jagan Government. They were put in the hands of British officials appointed by the Tory Government and of local officials mostly under the dominance of the local political opposition. The change of system of registration of voters from house-to-house enumeration to personal registration permitted registration of the same person in more than one place. The extensive use of proxies allowed registration frauds to be put into practice and in a few cases, even the 'dead' voted.

Despite this arrangement, the P.P.P. came out on top at the election. It was the only party which increased its percentage of votes, polling 3·18 per cent more than in 1961. The P.N.C. dropped by 0·4 per cent and the U.F. by 4 per cent, the latter's total falling from 16

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per cent to 12 per cent. Had the elections not been held before they were due, in late 1965, and had the voting age been reduced to 18 as was the wish of the Legislature in 1962, and of Mr. Burnham in 1951, the P.P.P. would have polled more than 50 per cent of the votes. The results demonstrated that had the elections been conducted on the 1961 basis of first-past-the-post, the P.P.P. would have won in the same 20 out of 35 constituencies which it had won in 1961.

In the light of these circumstances, the P.P.P. has regarded the election as a fraud. It has declared that the new P.N.C.-U.F. régime is unacceptable. At rallies held throughout the country on Sunday, December 20, 1964, it put forward a five-point demand including:

(1) Release of all detainees (all P.N.C. detainees have been released, but P.P.P. members are still in detention).
(2) New constitutional arrangements and a new electoral system.
(3) New elections.
(4) Voting at 18.
(5) Re-organisation of the Police and security forces so that they reflect a broad cross-section of the country.

Because of the fraud perpetrated in British Guiana, the P.P.P. leader Dr. Jagan refused to give advice to the Governor on the question of his resignation as Premier. He appealed to Mr. Anthony Greenwood, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to take the initiative in working out a political settlement. Unfortunately, Mr. Greenwood resorted to a constitutional amendment which empowered the Governor to name Mr. Burnham as premier, even though Mr. Burnham's party had polled less than Dr. Jagan's party.

Freedom lovers in Britain and elsewhere must be alarmed by the course of events in British Guiana. The P.N.C.-U.F. coalition Government is a sell-out to colonialism and imperialism, a betrayal of the interests of the Guianese people. This coalition Government cannot solve the problems of the people. The P.N.C.'s policy, according to the Commonwealth Mission which looked into the disturbances of 1962, is 'vague and amorphous'. Already the P.N.C. leader and head of the new Government, no doubt at the behest of his U.S. backers, has dropped references to democratic socialism which he demagogically used before and during the election campaign. The only link cementing Burnham and D'Aguiar is hatred of Cheddi Jagan and the P.P.P., and the backing of the U.S. Government.

There is every reason to fear that the new régime, having been installed by force and fraud, will perpetuate itself by the same means. Recent experience in Central and South America where constitutional democracy has been overthrown and U.S. 'big stick'

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methods applied, is giving cause for much concern in progressive circles here. Already the American-backed newspapers supporting the régime are using inciting language advocating the use of force and the denial of civil liberties to suppress the Jagans and the P.P.P. and to prepare the way for a dictatorship. Many regard this as inevitable, particularly when sooner or later the disillusionment and disenchantment, particularly of the working-class followers of the P.N.C., comes about. By then, however, it may be too late.

Those who love democracy and believe in constitutional Government must now speak out. Everything must be done to prevent British Guiana going down the road to caudillo-type dictatorship and possibly to a bloody South Vietnam or Congo.

THE STRUGGLE FOR COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

T. Cuthbert*

IN recent months fierce controversy has arisen in some areas over the establishment of comprehensive schools. Articles and letters have appeared in the press stating contrary views, and comprehensive schools already in being have been featured in television programmes. Organised opposition to their actual establishment was seen in cities like Liverpool and Bristol, even before Michael Stewart's declaration that the Labour Government would proceed to encourage local authorities to submit future educational plans on the lines of a unified comprehensive system.

This Tory-supported opposition sees the fight against comprehensive education as a class battle as shown by *The Times* leader, January 18:

> The comprehensive question would not generate the heat it does if it consisted merely of pedagogical matters which are in dispute. It happens also to touch on the exposed nerve of British political life—class. Many surveys have shown that middle-class children get grammar school places in larger proportions than working-class children. . . Schools are an important instrument for transmitting the manners, codes, attitudes, ideals, and learning of broad sub-cultures within society. Of these, the middle classes are not the least important, and unless they have lost all self-confidence they will insist that they have the schools for that purpose.

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Clearly this class battle must be joined by the whole of the labour movement to ensure that working-class children are no longer neglected and trained only to be the 'hewers of wood'. Even those who have pioneered the idea of comprehensive education, in the Communist Party and Labour Party, have not fully realised the potential to be gained by bringing the whole of the labour movement into this struggle, and have tended to become submerged beneath a welter of discussion on various types of secondary re-organisation.

At the moment the majority of secondary State schools are organised on a Bi-partisan system; that is, at 11-plus years the children are selected by examination to proceed to either grammar or secondary modern schools (known in some areas as high schools). It is true to say that two-thirds of our children proceed to secondary modern schools, with this average varying in some cities from 50 per cent to 90 per cent. Often it just depends on where they live.

In Leicestershire another scheme, known as the Leicester Plan, has abolished the 11-plus examination and all pupils proceed to high schools, and then at 14 years move up to the grammar school (with the disadvantage that still many children of the working class leave at 15 years of age). There the grammar schools have become the 'tops' of the system, but in other areas where the suggestion has been made to incorporate grammar schools in a comprehensive system, there has arisen the fiercest opposition. The view of the Tories and their press in these areas has been that it is all right to establish comprehensive schools for the working class provided that the grammar schools are left out! This of course perpetuates the educational segregation.

In other areas like Birmingham or London, Labour councils have established 'neighbourhood' comprehensive schools to which the majority of the pupils in that neighbourhood proceed, together with outside-the-district entrants who have passed the 11-plus examination, and whose parents have chosen such a comprehensive education. But again the grammar schools are excluded. Once inside some of these comprehensive schools selection is made and the children streamed into A, B, C, D forms, etc. Indeed some large comprehensive schools might have as many as 12 streams. This defeats the true purpose of the school and is concealed selection.

The key to the whole problem is the abolition of the 11-plus examination. It is a question which finds support and unity in many circles outside the labour movement. Once selection is ended the Local Authority is inevitably faced with the re-organisation of its

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secondary education. Of course, this will create many problems and it is here again that the labour movement must be clear on its objectives. The needs of the neighbourhood must be fully known and local conditions taken into account. Teachers, parents, Trades Councils and any bodies devoted to educational advance must be won over to the idea of comprehensive education, avoiding 'Town Hall' bureaucratic decisions to bulldoze the schemes through. The idea behind the organisation of each school must be that of mass educability and an end to all discrimination.

It must be decided whether established buildings (expanded moderns) can be turned into comprehensive schools (often not, if they have limited facilities) or whether new schools are to be built on a campus with upper, middle and lower departments, or should be organised in house blocks or tutorial groups. It would appear that 800-1,000 pupils is the optimum size under present conditions.

Much experience can be learnt from already established comprehensive schools. Despite a large administrative organisation, democracy by staff and pupil consultation must be assured. Where it is not feasible to abolish streaming straight away (due to streaming in junior schools), de-streaming of parallel forms might be visualised. A great deal of worthwhile experiment in teaching methods is going on in these schools. Common syllabuses are being worked out, and methods found to teach them to all children, bright and retarded alike. Team teaching where teachers co-operate in their work is being tried with much success. Children of mixed ability are taking part in all kinds of exciting holidays abroad and field studies, in dramatic work, 'eistedfodds' and musical festivals. Social groups in these schools cut across the academic groupings with a definite advantage to all. Teachers trained in colleges work alongside graduates, breaking down barriers in a highly stratified teaching profession.

The achievements of these comprehensive schools need to be widely publicised, and the facts made known that so-called 11-plus failures in them are gaining General Certificates of Education and some proceeding to the Universities. There is now a tremendous demand for increased educational facilities, and the Tories and Big Business need to be shown as the enemies in the way of its progress in their opposition to further comprehensive education. On the other hand the labour movement should be inflexible in some of the principles enunciated for its establishment, but flexible in the tactics to achieve it.

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EXPROPRIATION OF ARAB LAND IN ISRAEL

Tawfiq Toubi

Member of the Israeli Knesset.

ON the morning of September 2, 1964, under the protection of a large police force and other security forces, twenty houses and three water-cisterns belonging to the Arab villagers of El N'eim were blown up by dynamite by the Israeli authorities. Yoel Dar, correspondent of *Davar*, a semi-official newspaper, described the operation in the following dramatic words:

> A big explosion was heard yesterday before noon in the village of Arab El-N'eim in the Western Galilee. A mushroom of smoke rose high in the sky, furniture went up into the air, tin sheets were crushed and water-cisterns were demolished . . . while women screamed, children cried and grown-ups stood with threatening fists. . . .
>
> (September 3, 1964.)

The correspondent goes on to describe how the police forced over one hundred and fifty persons out of their houses (even a woman who had given birth a few hours before was made to leave her bed), to stand on a nearby hill to watch the blowing-up of their twenty houses and water-cisterns.

This was, however, only the latest action for clearing this part of the Galilee from its Arab inhabitants. Seventy-five houses have already been demolished in this area. inhabited by Arab-Aswa'ed, under the pretext of 'illegal building'. Hundreds had already been made homeless in this area and many others are being threatened with the same fate and even worse, with being completely driven out of the area, deprived of their lands.

On June 22, 1964, M. Aloni, deputy director of the Land Authority, announced at a press conference in Jerusalem that the Government authority would not hesitate to carry out the demolition of two hundred houses in order to bring about the total evacuation of the inhabitants of Arab El-Sawa'ed. The Government authorities have more than one pretext for wanting to expel more than two hundred and fifty families, over two thousand persons, from their homes and lands. First the Government spokesmen claim that this area is being used for Army manoeuvres and the safety of the population requires their evacuation; next they claim that the land tilled by Arab-El-Sawa'ed is State-owned land, illegally occupied by them after the establishment of the State of Israel.

However, everybody that knows this part of the country and its

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history, knows well that Arab El-Sawa'ed, described by the Government statements as Bedouins (to imply that they are 'nomads' who are unsettled) have actually been settled on their present lands as far back as the time of the Turkish rule in this country. They tilled the land, having 'grabbed' it from the desolation of the past hundred years; they tended their herds; they built their homes and dug water-cisterns for use in the dry months. It is worthwhile mentioning that some people even received permits to build new houses, but since 1954 building has been totally forbidden. What could the new families and the growing number of the population do except build new houses without a permit? Yet, the Israeli Government refuses to recognise all these facts, and notwithstanding facts, law, history and natural rights of people, continues to claim that these people have no right to their land—even when they hold an official certificate (Kushan) from the Government Land Offices. But the fact behind this position of the Government is the decision of 1954 to 'free' this area from its Arab inhabitants, come what may.

This area was used as a military training ground before 1954, even during the British Mandate by the British Army, and yet the population managed to live side-by-side with the military personnel without any difficulties. When, in 1954, there began to be casualties, even the school became a target. In 1961, when the inhabitants of the area were ordered by the military authorities to abandon their homes and move outside the area 'temporarily for three months' they appealed to the High Court of Justice. The order was thereupon withdrawn, and the Court ordered that the direction of gunfire should not be near the inhabited area. In 1962, the authorities, continuing their pressure to evacuate Arab El-Sawa'ed, closed the only school, explaining cynically that it was necessary for the safety of the children. But the Knesset Education Committee recommended the re-opening of the school because 'it would be safer for the children to be within the walls of the school. . . .'

However, the Eshkhol administration has ordered quicker steps for 'settling the Galilee'—the Ben Gurion administration called the scheme 'Jewishising the Galilee'. The Israeli official circles consider the existing situation in the Galilee as 'dangerous'. The chauvinist racist propaganda says the 'danger' is inherent in the fact that sixteen years after the formation of Israel, the Arab population constitutes ninety per cent of the population in the area. Therefore, it is necessary to change the population character of the Galilee; it must become Jewish. Jewish settlements must be built even if this

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means depriving Arab peasants of their land and expelling them from their homes.

In fact, this has actually been a planned policy ever since the establishment of the State. The Communist Party, democratic opinion and the Arab population as well, have stressed on more than one occasion that they are not opposed to the establishment of new settlements, but to the practice of depriving the Arab population of its lands. Two years ago, in pursuance of this policy, the Government expropriated about 5,000 dunams of Arab land under the pretext of building the new township of Carmiel. Later much of this expropriated land became an object for speculation by various Jewish land speculators who obtained the land from the Government. Had the township of Carmiel been planned two kilometres to the south, it would have been built on State property. But the real purpose was to expropriate Arab land.

As a result of planned expropriation, more than 650,000 dunams* of Arab-owned land, including 418,000 dunams of cultivated land, was expropriated. This is more than 55 per cent of Arab-owned land (of those Arabs still living in Israel since 1948). As a result of this, the average cultivated area in the Arab villages in Israel, at present, has dropped from 8·4 dunams per person on the eve of the establishment of the State, to 2·2 dunams per person today. Notwithstanding what has been accomplished in this respect, the Eshkol administration is intent on expropriating even more Arab land and further pauperising the Arab peasantry. The latest case of expropriation, of 4,000-5,000 dunams of land owned by the Arab peasants of Sahhnin village (Central Galilee), was under the pretext of building a new Army Camp. The administration intends to fulfil its racist programme of breaking-up what is considered to be Arab regions in the country and altering their demographic character by means of Jewish settlement, even at the expense of demolishing Arab villages.

Israeli democratic public opinion considers such a policy not only harmful and unjust towards the Arab population, but detrimental to the very interests of the Jewish people. To carry on such a policy toward the Arab population in Israel, is not only an internal matter for Israel, but has its repercussions on the whole pattern of Israeli-Arab relations to the detriment of peace and good neighbourly relations with the Arab countries. That is why the Communist Party of Israel, has persistently called upon and mobilised public action, for putting an end to these inhuman acts and to stop the expropriation of Arab lands.

*1 dunam = app. ¼ acre.

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BRITAIN AND ATOMIC ENERGY

Dr. E. H. S. Burhop

THE great basic contributions to nuclear physics made in this country, particularly by Rutherford and his school, first at Manchester and later at Cambridge, are well known. The specific discovery of nuclear fission which opened the way to the possibility of the controlled release of atomic energy in the nuclear reactor and its explosive release in the atomic bomb was made in Germany after Rutherford's death, while the basic researches from which it was possible to infer the feasibility of releasing nuclear energy on a large scale were made by Joliot-Curie and his collaborators, particularly Halban and Kowarski in Paris and published in a paper dated September 19, 1939, just after the outbreak of war.

Now, an official history of the British atomic energy project from 1939 to 1945* has been written by the historian and archivist of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, who has had full access to the official documents and records. One has always to face the danger in reading such an account that the facts presented may be slanted to serve the interests of the government that has commissioned it. As one who has had many contacts with the scientists mainly involved and who himself has worked on one aspect of the project, I can only say that Miss Gowing's account rings true and correctly reflects the way the participants in the project were thinking at the time. Secondly, there is the danger that an official history may become so factual and dull that it it requires a great effort to read. The present work certainly avoids this danger. The reader, whether layman or scientist will find here a fascinating picture of the wartime atomic energy (code name 'tube alloy') project, and an exciting account, not only of technical developments of far-reaching consequence but also of the actual state of relations between wartime Britain and its American and French allies.

Physicists in the United Kingdom were quick to realise the implications of nuclear fission. In an historic memorandum written by Frisch and Peierls in Birmingham early in 1940 the conclusion was reached that if the rare uranium 235 (present to one part in 140 in natural uranium) could be separated from the more common uranium 238 it should be possible to make an atomic bomb which would have tremendous explosive force. Simon in Oxford suggested

*_Britain and Atomic Energy 1939-1945_, Margaret Gowing, Macmillan, 464 pp. 55s.

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that the separation could be accomplished by diffusion of a gaseous compound of uranium through a special membrane and Haworth in Birmingham, together with chemists working with I.C.I., worked out how this could be manufactured in sufficient quantity on a commercial scale. Bretscher and Feather in Cambridge suggested that a new man-made element, plutonium, derived from uranium 238 could also be used for an atomic bomb.

In the meantime, just prior to the fall of France in the summer of 1940, Joliot-Curie had sent his two leading assistants, Halban and Kowarski, to Cambridge, together with almost the entire world stock of heavy water which their foresight had led them to acquire from Norway in advance of the German invasion of that country (Joliot-Curie himself remained behind in Paris where he played a leading role in the resistance movement). Soon after their arrival in Cambridge, Halban and Kowarski demonstrated that the heavy water in conjunction with natural uranium should make possible the construction of a reactor which would lead not only to the controlled release of atomic energy but also to a means of large scale production of plutonium.

These were the high points of wartime achievement in nuclear energy in the United Kingdom. Convinced of the possibility of producing a nuclear weapon, British scientists in 1940 and 1941 visited the United States to stimulate interest there. At first they found American official quarters and even many American physicists sceptical, but research on the basic physical problems involved was continuing and arrangements were made for the exchange of information between Britain and the United States. This was necessary, because, realising the immense wartime implications of nuclear energy, American physicists and the publishers of the leading American physics journals had imposed a voluntary censorship in the field, even though the United States was not yet actually in the war.

This interchange of technical information worked well until mid-1942. By this time the size and cost of the industrial effort that would be needed to produce a bomb in a reasonable time and the vulnerability to an attack of the necessary establishments if they were built in the United Kingdom aroused interest in Britain in a joint Anglo-American atomic energy project. Just when such proposals were being seriously put, however, it was found that the mainsprings of the existing forms of Anglo-American co-operation had dried up. Even the exchange of information ceased and despite British pressure was not resumed until after the signing of an historic

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agreement between Roosevelt and Churchill at Quebec in August 1943. The terms of the Quebec agreement explain many of the post-war developments in this field which seemed puzzling at the time. Great Britain and the U.S.A. agreed at Quebec:

> First, that we will never use this agency against each other.
>
> Secondly, that we will not use it against third parties without each other's consent.
>
> Thirdly, that we will not either of us communicate any information about Tube Alloys to third parties except by mutual consent.

This agreement went on to establish terms for putting Anglo-American scientific collaboration in this field on a formal basis and made provision for groups of scientists from the United Kingdom to be seconded to some of the main U.S. atomic energy establishments and for collaboration between a joint U.K.-Canadian group in Montreal and a corresponding American group. The price the Americans exacted for this agreement was high, however. A fourth clause of the Quebec agreement specified that 'any post-war advantages of an industrial or commercial character shall be dealt with . . . on terms to be specified by the President of the United States to the Prime Minister of Great Britain'. The subjugation of British policy to American demands in this field was complete.

When the British scientists eventually began arriving in America to participate in the 'Manhattan' project in accordance with the terms of the Quebec agreement they found a fantastic change had taken place in the previous eighteen months during which Anglo-American exchange of information had been suspended. A huge new city for the production of pure uranium 235 had been built at Oak Ridge in Tennessee; a large and well-equipped scientific laboratory had been constructed at Los Alamos in the New Mexican desert; and there were rumours of an entirely new industrial establishment at Hanford in Washington state from which however British personnel were excluded. In the event the direct British participation in the American effort came too late and was on too small a scale to have much influence. It was of importance, however, in relation to United Kingdom post-war atomic policy both in the industrial and military fields.

The terms of the Quebec agreement underline the severe limitations of the war-time alliance. At a time when battles of unprecedented violence were being fought out on the Russian plains and the armies of the Soviet Union were engaging the bulk of the Nazi war machine and, to use Churchill's words, 'tearing the guts out of the German army', their British and American allies, in the closest

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secrecy from their other allies, were negotiating the Quebec agreement with its profound implications for post-war policy.

The military and political implications of the successful development of an atomic bomb in relation to the possibility of continuing the war-time alliance into the post-war world began to be viewed with concern both in Britain and the United States. These implications were especially apparent to the greatest living nuclear physicist, Niels Bohr, who had left his laboratory in Denmark, been picked up by an R.A.F. plane in Sweden and brought to England early in 1944. Bohr was very conscious of the likelihood of tension between the Western Allies and Russia after the war, but he believed that the atomic bomb had such destructive power that by making war unthinkable it could contribute to the promotion of confidence and co-operation. On the other hand, the Anglo-U.S. policy of keeping everything secret from their Russian allies was likely to have disastrous consequences. Bohr's views met with varying measures of support from leading scientists and from such political figures as Sir John Anderson, Lord Halifax and General Smuts. Arrangements were made for Bohr to put his ideas in person to Roosevelt and to Churchill. Although he found Roosevelt receptive, there was no common ground with Churchill, who was apparently incapable of appreciating the grave misgivings of Bohr and many others. To his close associate, Lord Cherwell, Churchill opined 'It seems to me Bohr ought to be confined or at any rate made to see that he is very near the edge of mortal crimes'.

The distrust extended not only toward the Russians but also toward the French. After the liberation of Paris there was great American pressure to prevent Halban returning there for a visit, despite the great services he had rendered to the allied cause and at one time Churchill even contemplated that Joliot-Curie 'should be forcibly but comfortably detained for some months'. No disclosure was made to Russia or anyone else until the first bomb fell on Japan. The seeds of the cold war and of the harvest of suspicion and tension we have since been reaping were sown at this time. On the allied side Churchill, the American army leaders responsible for the Manhattan project, Truman and to some extent Roosevelt even, must all bear a measure of responsibility.

On the question of the use of the bomb also counsel was divided. Many of the more far-sighted scientists working on the bomb argued against its use without warning in a preliminary demonstration and prepared the so-called Frank memorandum in support of their view.

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Their proposals were over-ruled on the ground of military exigency. Nearly twenty years later the burning problem of the bomb remains and in a much more acute form. The atomic bomb, a thousand times as powerful as a conventional bomb has been succeeded by the hydrogen bomb which is one thousand times more powerful again. Even Bohr and his colleagues did not foresee the full extent of the damage that can be wrought by nuclear weapons, particularly the extent of the genetical and other long-term radiation effects.

It is true that the further use of nuclear weapons in war has so far been held off, but mankind still faces the threat of nuclear annihilation. Nevertheless, the situation is in one respect more favourable today than it was in 1944-5 when Bohr and his colleagues tried and failed to prevent atomic energy developing into a great threat against the future of mankind. They were handicapped because owing to war-time security they could not enlist the support of the great mass of the people against anti-humanist policies. Today as a result of years of patient educative work, the great masses of the people everywhere are beginning to understand the nature of nuclear war, the need for disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons if human survival is to be assured. Already one very limited partial success has been achieved in the Moscow Test Ban Treaty. Small as this gain was, it was a first step which must be followed by a complete ban on nuclear weapons and agreement to prevent their proliferation as a preliminary to real measures of disarmament and control.

Although limited by its nature as an official history, Miss Gowing's book provides an interesting insight into the origins of some of the most difficult and dangerous problems that face the post-war world.

BOOK REVIEWS

Documents of the First International. 1866-1868

Lawrence & Wishart. 444 pp. 21*s.*

THIS SECOND VOLUME* of Minutes and documents of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association (the First International) covers the two years following the first Congress at Geneva in September 1866. It is an indispensable source, which should have been made available long ago, for tracing the history of socialist ideas in the working class movement of this country, as well as internationally. Particularly striking is the evidence it contains of the patient, unremitting work of Marx to advance the struggle of the workers on the basis of their own experience and thus bring about a gradual realisation of the need for a socialist programme. And this close, practical contact with the workers' movement was maintained by Marx at the very time when he was about to publish the first edition of *Capital.* At its

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first Congress the International did not adopt any proposals for achieving the basic aim of conquering political power. But the documents in this volume include an 'Address to all Members', as a preparation for the Lausanne Congress of 1867, in which one of the main questions raised was whether land, mines, railways, etc., ought to be the property of private individuals or converted into public property. The Congress voted for nationalising transport and exchange, but not land. The continued work on behalf of socialist principles bore fruit at the next Congress. Another outstanding feature of the International's work as shown by this volume was its close attention to and connection with working class activities in Britain. It is to be noted how Marx raised the Irish question as a crucial issue for British workers. Four important speeches of Marx are recorded in the Minutes, and documents issued by the General Council are appended. In this volume, too, the text is presented in a scholarly way, with a useful introduction and notes.

CLEMENS DUTT.

*The first volume was reviewed in the *Labour Monthly*, December 1963.

On African Socialism

Leopold Sedar Senghor
Pall Mall Press. 174 pp. 30s.

SOCIALIST IDEAS are becoming extremely popular in all the independent African states, but among African leaders there is a great variety of socialist concepts. Though marxist ideas are spreading, many African leaders are loth to apply a marxist analysis to the actual situation in Africa, and try to argue that marxism may be applicable to Europe but not to Africa. This has given rise to various brands of socialist ideas—African socialism, Arab socialism, Muslim socialism, Neo-Destour socialism, and pragmatic socialism. The most advanced African leaders (notably Nkrumah, Ben Bella, Keita, etc.) have grown out of this early phase, and stress there can be only scientific socialism, but applied in relation to specific African conditions.

Leopold Sedar Senghor still adheres to his own special brand of socialism, sometimes called 'African socialism' and sometimes 'Negritude'. The European influence on this division between Negroes and Arabs cannot be concealed: 'Today, our Negritude no longer expresses itself as opposition to European values, but as a complement to them'. The practical outcome of this is made clear in the Introduction: 'Co-operation with the former coloniser must be maintained on a egalitarian basis to the advantage of both countries'.

The practical expression of this outlook is the increasing grip of imperialism on the economy of Senegal—and in striking contrast to Ghana where the concept of 'African socialism' and 'Negritude' is being sharply criticised, and increasing emphasis is being made on scientific socialism, the application of marxist ideas to the problems of Africa.

IDRIS COX.

George Brown
A Profile by Cassandra
Pergamon Press. 36 pp. 12s. 6d.

A EULOGY IN PROSE, cartoons and photographs, with the balance in favour of photographs by more than two to one. We have to be thankful that Cassandra is not given to verse.

ALAN BROWN.

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MINERS AND 'LM'

THE February Notes, 'Coal, Oil and Britain', brought a marked response from the miners. Hundreds of orders poured in from Areas and Lodges all over the country as their campaign against pit closures heightened. *L.M.* was well in evidence in the hands of many delegates at the impressive Lobby by the Welsh miners, and substantial orders are still flowing in. So great has been the interest in these Notes that several Lodges have asked for repeat orders.

'We all regard *L.M.* as the essential nourishment for the Socialist mind' writes a reader from the Steel industry. Asking us for more articles dealing with the case for Public Ownership he adds 'We are concerned here that a fresh take-over will still leave the real power in the same hands'.

A resourceful Irish seller, left with a few copies over, used these in a local factory to win new readers. We know this worked, because he has increased his order by eight! A Scots reader who sells eleven *L.M.*s regularly plans to invite his readers to a discussion circle at his home each month. Using either the 'Notes of the Month' or a particular article as the basis for discussion, this could prove a source of lively political debate. For these and many other ideas for expanding our readership, we thank you all.

Helen Falber.

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